

Customer No.: 31561
Application No.: 10/707,141
Docket No.: 9097-US-PA-1

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

The Office Action rejects claims 7-8, 10-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Higuma et al. (US 6,224,200 B1). The Office Action also objects claim 9 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim (claim 7), but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Upon entry of the amendment in this response, claim 7 is amended by incorporating the limitation of claim 9 and thus claim 9 is canceled. Claim 18-25 are added and supported, for example, by Fig. 3 and the specification, paragraphs [0021]-[0022]. Applicants believe that the foregoing amendments do not induce new matter. Thus, reconsideration of those claims is respectfully requested.

Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 7-8, 10-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Higuma et al. (US 6,224,200 B1). The Office Action also objects claim 9 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim (claim 7), but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant respectively transverse the rejection as it applied to claims 7-8, 10-17 for at least the reasons set forth below.

Applicants have amended claim 7 by incorporating the limitation of claim 9, and thus canceled claim 9. Since Applicants has amended claim 7 by incorporating the limitation of

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claim 9, Higuma et al. do not anticipate the amended claim 7. Consequently, Higuma et al. do not anticipate dependent claims 8, 10-17 as a matter of law.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the grounds of rejection have been addressed and the rejection has been overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Newly Added Claims

Applicant has added new claims 18-25. Applicants believe that the new claims are allowable and not anticipated by Higuma et al.

The new independent claim 18 recites as follows.

18. An ink storage unit, comprising:

an ink tank, defining an inner confinement space limited by at least an inner sidewall, and further provided with an air inlet and an ink outlet, the air inlet enabling an external air to enter the confinement space and the ink outlet enabling an ink to be outputted out of the confinement space; and

an ink storage body, received within the confinement space, the ink storage body being comprised of:

a first ink storage portion, made of porous material and placed approximately close to the air inlet;

a second ink storage portion, made of porous material and placed approximately close to the ink outlet; and

a spacing member, placed between the first and second ink storage portions to separate the first ink storage portion from the second ink storage portion such that the first ink storage portion does not physically contact the second ink storage portion.

In independent claim 18, since the first and the second ink storage portions are made of porous material and received within the confinement space, the first and the second ink storage portions are tangible objects, but not hollow chambers. Therefore, the first and the

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second ink storage portions are similar to the foamed blocks F_B & F, but not the ink chambers a-d disclosed in Higuma et al. (see Figs. 39, 40 & 43).

However, Higuma et al. disclose that the foamed block F has an extended portion (or a branch) which extends through the bottom of the ink chambers c & b and physically contacts the bottom of the foamed block F_B such that the foamed blocks F_B & F are not completely separated by the ink chambers c & b (see Figs. 39, 40 & 43). Since the foamed block F has an extended portion (or a branch) that physically contacts the bottom of the foamed block F_B , the ink may flows from the foamed block F through the extended portion of the foamed block F to the foamed block F_B , and there may be ink leakage from the air inlet 503.

On the contrary, in new independent claim 18, the spacing member 222c is placed between the first and second ink storage portions 222a & 222b to separate the first ink storage portion 222a from the second ink storage portion 222b such that the first ink storage portion 222a does not physically contact the second ink storage portion 222b (see Fig. 3). Since the first ink storage portion 222a does not physically contact the second ink storage portion 222b, the continuity of the interfaces 230 (see Fig. 3) is cut off to prevent ink leakage through the air inlet 216.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 7 and 18 patently define over the prior art references, and should be allowed. For at least the same reasons, dependent claims 8, 10-17, and 19-25 patently define over the prior art references as well.

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CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the pending claims 7-8, and 10-25 are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,


Belinda Lee

Registration No.: 46,863

Jianq Chyun Intellectual Property Office
7th Floor-1, No. 100
Roosevelt Road, Section 2
Taipei, 100
Taiwan
Tel: 011-886-2-2369-2800
Fax: 011-886-2-2369-7233
Email: belinda@jciigroup.com.tw
Usa@jciigroup.com.tw